

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHFN #0023 0151738
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 151738Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2414
INFO RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0332
RUEHRY/AMEMBASSY CONAKRY 0014
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0225
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T FREETOWN 000023

SIPDIS
NOFORN

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W (JHUNTER)
EMBASSY BRUSSELS FOR DEA (TSCARANTINO)
CONSULATE LAGOS FOR DEA (SGAYE)
DOJ FOR DEA/OS/OSE (MCMANAMON/LENARTOWICZ)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [SL](#)
SUBJECT: GIBRILLA KAMARA PAYS COCAINE DEFENSE TEAM BILLS

Classified By: CDA Glenn Fedzer for reasons 1/4 (b/d)

¶1. (S/REL UK) A source from the cocaine defense team disclosed on January 15 that two members of the legal team met with Gibrilla Kamara (aka GK) in Conakry prior to the Guinean coup in December, 2008. The source initially stated that GK was contacted to provide case-related information, but later admitted that GK was actually contacted for money. The foreign accused have apparently had great difficulty paying their legal fees; defense lawyers initially demanded \$200K, but following negotiations accepted \$68K for the entire international group. GK allegedly paid part of this amount, though the source intimated that contact will be made with him again soon for another payment. The defense team has been out of touch with GK since the December 23 coup, but now seem to feel more comfortable reaching out to him and potentially traveling back to Guinea. It is also possible that GK's wife, who is now reported by a reliable Sierra Leone Police source to have returned to the Freetown area, will assist with payments.

¶2. (S/REL UK) The lawyers that reportedly interviewed GK say he revealed that he was not the lynch-pin of the July drug run, but instead Mohamed Sesay (aka Ahmed Sesay) was put in charge of that particular operation. Sesay was given \$1 million in U.S. currency to make the appropriate bribes, as well as a vehicle with which to gift the President and deepen the bond of friendship they already share (Note: President Koroma is a long-time friend of Ibrahim Kemoh Sesay, suspended Minister of Transportation, and his cousin Mohamed. The Sesays assisted in bankrolling Koroma's successful 2007 Presidential bid. End note.). Sesay did not follow directions well, according to GK, only doling out a few hundred dollars in bribes and keeping the vehicle for his own use. He was allegedly criticized by his superiors in the cartel for his handling of the vehicle and ordered to give it to Koroma in the weeks prior to the bust, however, the source could not confirm if Koroma ever received it.

¶3. (S/REL UK) Speaking more generally about the trial, the source stated his frustration with the perceived bias of Justice Browne-Marke in support of the prosecution. He feels that Browne-Marke is holding the defense to a higher standard than the prosecution, though Browne-Marke's decisions to date do not necessarily reflect this. He mentioned in particular the difficulty the legal team is having defending Alimamy Kabia, the former Office of National Security officer who was placed as a mole within the criminal organization and allegedly became a double agent for the narcotraffickers. The defense want to call Abdullai Mustapha, head of the Central

Intelligence and Security Unit, as a witness, but this request was denied by Browne-Marke because of Mustapha's intelligence role. Kabia implicated both Kemoh Sesay and Vice President Samsamana from the witness stand on January 14. Browne-Marke warned Kabia that he should not implicate anyone not facing charges. GK was also reportedly vocal about Kemoh Sesay's involvement in his meeting with the attorneys.

¶4. (S/NF) Comment: The source provided the information to Emboff willingly, but was clearly uncomfortable discussing the defense team's interaction with GK. As the case develops, it is becoming increasingly obvious that GK has the financial resources and intent to influence the outcome of the trial. The longer the trial goes on, the higher the risk that the traffickers will escape justice. If GK is to be believed, Mohamed Sesay was the weak link in the Sierra Leonean branch of the criminal organization, and is likely now taking the fall for Kemoh Sesay and others. Whether or not narcotraffickers maintain or increase their links with Kemoh Sesay remains to be seen, but post strongly believes that they will try to find other means and contacts to continue their operations here. End comment.
FEDZER